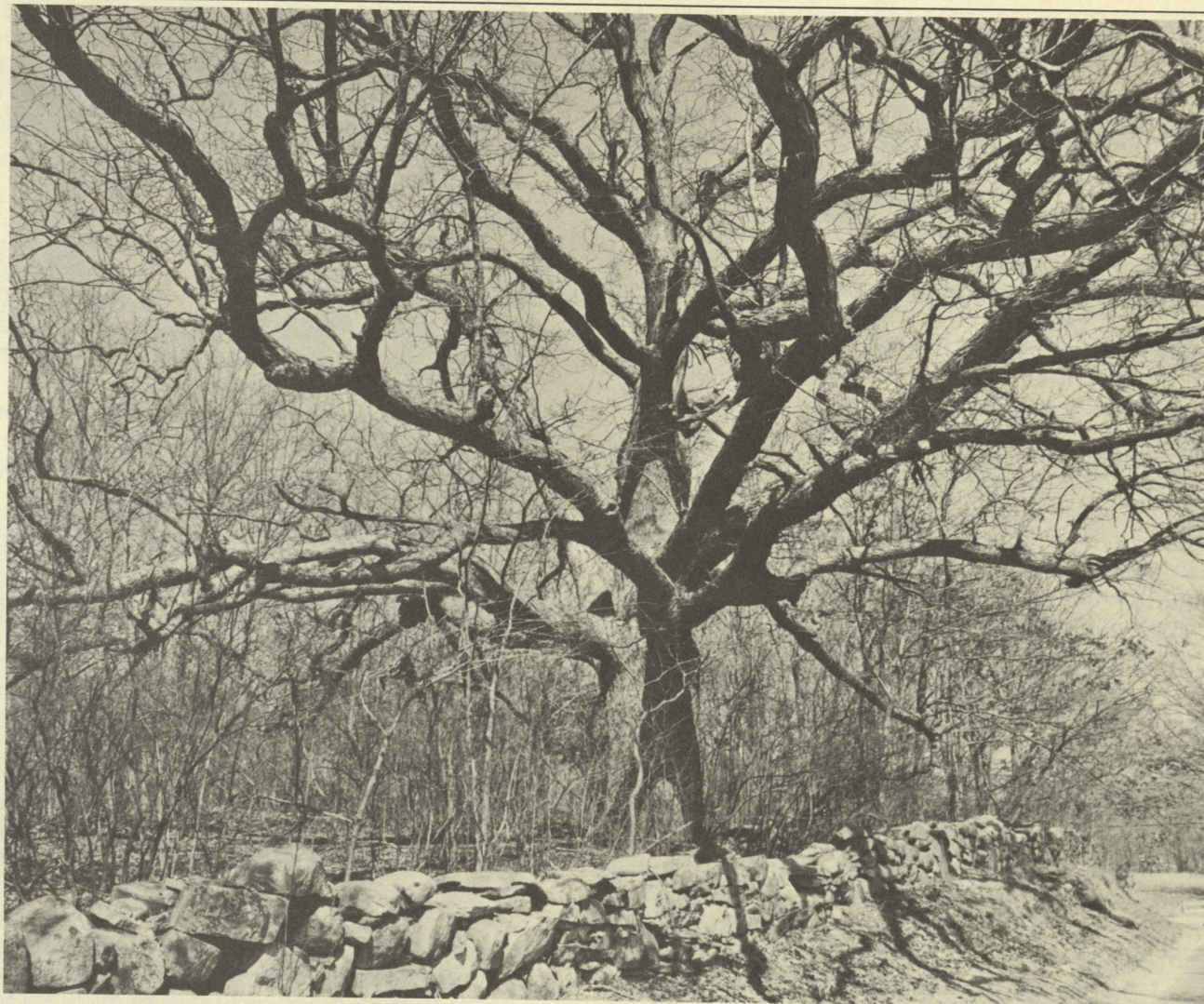


From the Land

April/1976



Oak Tree, White Oak Grove, Montville

Emily Ford Photo

The Nature Conservancy
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THE CONNECTICUT CHAPTER ACQUIRES...

Rock Spring Wildlife Refuge, Scotland — 85 acre addition. Through this bargain sale purchase, the Conservancy has increased its Rock Spring Wildlife Refuge to 428 acres, containing well over a mile of the unspoiled Little River.

The eighty-five acre addition was purchased at a fraction of its fair market value from the children of Joseph C. Chadbourne. The three children — Joseph H. Chadbourne III from Ohio, Mrs. George Maze from Illinois, and Mrs. Roland Baker from Massachusetts are long-time conservationists. Mr. Chadbourne is President of the Institute for Environmental Education; Mrs. Maze is a supporter of TNC in Illinois; and Mrs. Baker is a supporter of conservation efforts — both in Massachusetts and in Rhode Island. The funds for the purchase were generously given by Vanda M. Shoemaker, wife of David Shoemaker, 1974 donor of the major section of the Scotland preserve.

The acquisition of the acreage was an important move by the Conservancy. The property contains a diverse array of vegetation, interesting geological features and is abundant in wildlife. Deer and their yarding areas have readily been noted. Several active fox dens have also been discovered. The fairly open quality of the forest, combined with proximity to water, evergreen stands and open fields, make this area especially productive for large and small mammals. There are many vistas of the river as it meanders in curves and oxbows through the unspoiled valley.

The 428 acre Conservancy Preserve is contiguous to the State's 135 acre Pudding Hill Wildlife Area bringing the total protected land to 563 acres and several miles of the Little River.

This acquisition reflects the emphasis the Connecticut Chapter is placing on the protection of

Connecticut's remaining natural waterways and the expansion of the Conservancy's preserved areas. The local stewardship committee set up by the Chapter for the preserve and headed up by Mr. David Miller of Scotland, will incorporate this new acreage in their preserve management program.

Cone Property

The Nature Conservancy and the West Farms Land Trust have acquired 64 acres in a joint project in Waterford. This acquisition has shown the clout effective conservation organizations can have when they put their minds and resources to work for the preservation of natural areas.

The acreage, known as the Cone property, was being held by the Estate of Madeline Cone, for sale to the highest bidder. The property is an important link between extensive areas already privately preserved by the Connecticut Arboretum and tracts held as open space by the Town of Waterford. It is also a significant buffer in the protection of the Hunts Brook Watershed.

The land holds a typical mix of hardwoods with a very extensive stand of beech, white oak, blue beech and impressive numbers of Prince's Pine of unusual beauty. It is bisected by several small streams and there are rock outcroppings containing sizable garnets. The terrain is varied with open understory, largely forested and old fields grown up to cedar and pasture juniper. This piece of land is a New England microcosm with woodlots and small abandoned fields.

The Conservancy was first approached by the West Farms Land Trust for financial assistance through its Project Revolving Fund. This four million dollar fund is made available to all branches of the Conservancy and to private land preservation organizations such as land trusts. If the property meets certain criteria and the private organizations can show a sound plan for fund-raising, a loan is given to purchase the property. The loan is given with a 90-day interest free period with the balance to be paid at 5% interest within three years from the date of purchase.

The Connecticut Chapter has been encouraging use of the fund by the many lands trusts in the state so that lack of immediate monies for significant land acquisition will not deter an active acquisition program. The Conservancy's Project Revolving Fund has enabled many organizations to acquire unique natural areas when they come on the market and still have the needed time to carry out an effective fund raising program to pay for the purchase. The Nature Conservancy holds title to the land until the loan is paid back and then transfers it with deed restrictions to the local organization.

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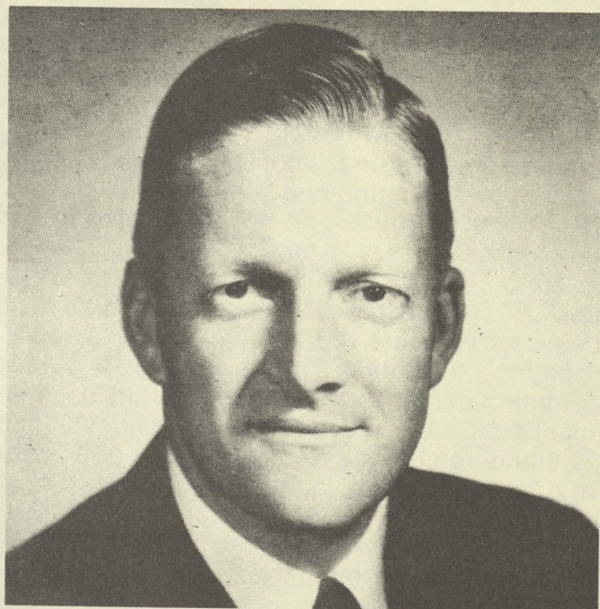
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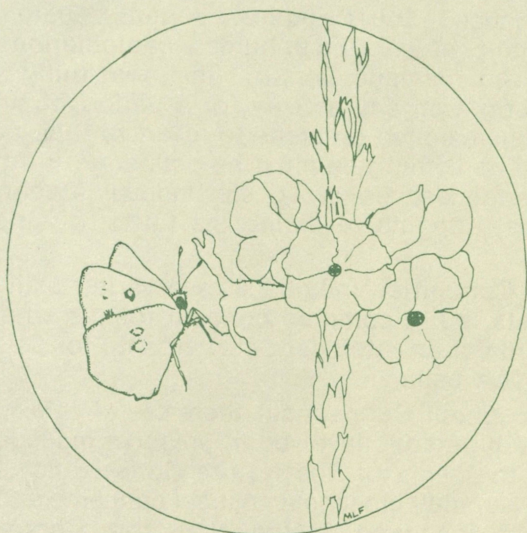


Dr. Charles H. W. Foster will be the principal speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Chapter on Saturday, May 22nd, at the Town Hall in Cornwall, Connecticut.

Dr. Foster has been appointed Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, effective July 1, 1976.

He is currently Professor of Environmental Policy at the University of Massachusetts and a senior advisor of Bio-Enviro Systems, a division of the consulting firm of Arthur D. Little, Inc.

He is a past president of The Nature Conservancy (national) and has been Commissioner of Natural Resources and State Forester of Massachusetts.



Line Drawings by Margaret LaFarge



CHAPTER RECEIVES GRANT FOR LAND TRUSTS

The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter, has received a sizable foundation grant to put in motion the first stage of the Conservancy's proposed Land Trust Service Bureau. The grant will be used to fund the work of Mary Anne Guitar, well-known conservationist, on behalf of the Conservancy's Land Trust Service Bureau. There are 66 volunteer Land Trusts in Connecticut and the Bureau is being set up to assist them in developing professional skills needed to carry out successful land preservation work.

Charles Scott, Executive Director said that, "We can now begin a program which Land Trusts have requested from The Nature Conservancy for several years. With this expression of confidence in our proposal, we will be approaching other Connecticut Foundations to secure monies to get the entire program underway. The grant we have just received will fund the first phase of the project."

The Nature Conservancy is fortunate to have someone as uniquely qualified as Ms. Guitar to help launch the Land Trust Service Bureau. She is a founder, past president and currently a Trustee of the Redding Land Trust, one of the oldest and most successful Trusts in Connecticut. She is a past member of the Board of Trustees of The Connecticut Chapter, and as the Chapter's Vice-Chairman, she initiated a state-wide Land Trust Conference which sparked interest in the proposed Service Bureau. She is a professional writer who has specialized in environmental issues during the past two years. She has written about Connecticut's unique Land Trust movement for a variety of national publications. Ms. Guitar will meet with all of the local preservation organizations in the State and assist the Bureau in focusing its service on areas of crucial concern to Land Trusts. She will be available to meet with the Trusts and share with them the experiences of other private conservation groups in successful land preservation.

Information on the Land Trust Service Bureau can be obtained from the Chapter offices or Ms. Mary Anne Guitar, Old Redding Road, West Redding, Connecticut 06896 (938-2043).



Cathedral Pines, Cornwall, Connecticut, with a Preserve Management Committee in action. L to R — A. B. Weissman, B. M. Ridgway, C. M. Scott, R. S. Fenn and F. E. Calhoun, chairman of Cathedral Pines and Ballyhack.

WE ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES

When The Nature Conservancy acquires title to a property, we roll up our sleeves. The hard work has just begun. In the process of 'just letting nature take its course,' TNC's preserve management committee system insures that each preserve receives individual and expert attention from the time of its acquisition on.

For insights into this process I attended a meeting of the newly-formed Griswold Point Preserve Management Committee, which has in its care a mile long sandspit in Old Lyme at the mouth of the Connecticut River. The Nature Conservancy received an undivided half-interest in the Point from Dr. Matthew Griswold in 1973 and purchased the remaining half-interest in 1975. The area is an example of what has become disturbingly rare, a beach — dune — marsh ecosystem, a vanishing habitat. There are few such areas left undisturbed on the northeast coast. How does TNC give it the protection and the care it requires?

One of the unique aspects of The Conservancy is the involvement of the local community in the stewardship of Conservancy preserves, hence a first step is to form a preserve management committee of local volunteers. The skills of lawyers, educators, scientists, and conservationists are sought. Adjacent landowners may wish to be involved and very often the land donor and his family become absorbingly active in the protection of the area. The members of local land trusts, conservation commissions and town governments are approached. For the Griswold Point committee, fourteen well qualified people were assembled, among them, THE Roger Tory Peterson; Professor William R. Burch, a natural resources sociologist from Yale; biologist Robert Craig of Connecticut's DEP Coastal Management Program, and two ornithologists: William G. Burt and Paul Spitzer. The committee is chaired by Kinsley Twining, engineer and oceanographer, with other members of equally intense interest — William B. Carlin, Evan S. Griswold, Mathew Griswold, Jr., Mrs. Theodore R. Hillhouse, John Lohman, Robert E. Peterson, M. F. Roberts, Mrs. E. Gregory Smith and Lydia Smith.

This newly formed committee is now undergoing a period of indoctrination. Art Weissman, assistant director of the Chapter, has introduced them to the principles and aims of TNC: ecosystem and species preservation, research, land use, aesthetic enjoyment and outdoor education programs. The Committee sets up its own bylaws and begins to formulate a stewardship program. The usual, first requirement is to obtain an ecological survey of the preserve. This had been done at Griswold Point during the summer of 1975 through the Connecticut Chapter's Student Intern Program. The survey outlines the history of the area and describes its physical environment: its geology, soils, water, vegetation and fauna. With this information in hand,

and with continued guidance from the Connecticut Chapter, the committee undertakes to identify the long range goals of the preserve. Once the plan is established, the function of the committee will be to continue working to implement the plan and to insure adequate protection for the preserve.

The Griswold Point members were faced with an immediate, challenging, people problem. For many years, summer camping had been a way of life to the Point. About 30 groups had been returning to camp there. Although they were responsible campers, some serious deterioration had taken place. Areas of dune grass had been destroyed and, of course, the presence of campers did not encourage wildlife or the nesting of birdlife. The Committee considered many alternatives. Advice was sought from the Connecticut Chapter Preserve Management Committee, a standing committee of the Board of Trustees. With a good deal of agonized deliberation, the Griswold Point Committee decided that in view of the fragile nature of the area and the uniqueness of the primary dune system, the broadest interests of all society could best be served by discontinuing camping. Letters were sent to the campers involved explaining the action and requesting cooperation in preventing further deterioration to Griswold Point. A gentle touch was needed to convey The Conservancy's concern for both social and environmental responsibilities.

Now the committee must consider the goals for the Griswold Point Preserve. To restore it as a breeding site for rare and endangered bird species, as it was years ago? To focus on a compatible system of scientific study and research? Whatever the ultimate decision, human use must be taken into consideration. The Point is accessible by boat and the area below high water legally open at all times. The committee must find ways of educating the public as to the fragile nature of the area and to program as to how it may be enjoyed with the least disturbance. Other points under debate: the desirability of *any* kind of human manipulation, such as storm damage repair; the feasibility of a moratorium on any activity for a period of time to allow the camped on areas to revert to their natural state. The committee must be deliberate in making long-range decisions. To start slowly, feeling its way, as it begins to define the future of Griswold Point.

The Committee members have varied skills and interests, but a common concern for the land. The evolution of an intelligent stewardship for Griswold Point has begun.

Throughout Connecticut there are at this writing 292 such persons involved in preserve management under the aegis of The Nature Conservancy. Their expertise, their closeness to local concerns and their love of the land insure that the Connecticut Chapter'd 9,000 acres of preserves are in good hands.

Carolyn Wheeler

SATURDAY MORNING WALKS

The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter and the Connecticut Audubon Society are jointly sponsoring 9 field trips to Conservancy properties this year. The trips run from March to October on seven different TNC preserves around the State. Connecticut Audubon provides limited transportation from Fairfield and also provides guides for the walks.

Each of the walks, which take place on Saturday mornings, has a specific subject relevant to the area being visited. Among the topics are "Hibernation and Migration," "Warblers and Wildflowers," "Shorebirds and Salt Marsh Plants," and "General Natural History." Two walks have already taken place in March at Dennis Farm and Cathedral Pines Preserves, and the remaining trips will take place as follows:

- Saturday, April 24
Spiderweed, Middletown
- Saturday, May 15
Byram River Gorge, Greenwich
- Saturday, June 5
Rock Spring Wildlife Refuge, Scotland
- Saturday, July 17
Cathedral Pines, Cornwall
- Saturday, July 24
Cottrell Marsh, Stonington
- Saturday, August 28
Sunny Valley, Bridgewater
- Saturday, October 9
Dennis Farm Preserve, Pomfret

For information about transportation and meeting place, call The Nature Conservancy at 344-0716 or Connecticut Audubon at 259-6305.



Site of Annual Meeting, Cornwall, Connecticut Town Hall & Library

EAR TO THE GROUND

Eighty-five per cent of the Connecticut Chapter's land acquisitions come into the fold as gifts from generous donors, and a good thing too, since the vanishing natural areas in our state carry ever increasing, almost out of sight values.

Nature Conservancy members are naturally our greatest natural source of information about potential natural areas ripe for preservation.

Criteria to bear in mind while keeping an ear to the ground, an eye on spring and a nose nostril slightly dilated to catch the essence of a potential ecosystem:

- * Does the site have unique or significant qualities with the capability of supporting scientific study and educational research?

- * Is it important for the protection of other natural assets?

- * Is it adjacent to an existing Conservancy sanctuary or government preserve?

- * Does it control, or can an assemblage be programmed to control, a watershed?

- * Is the acquisition feasible? Would the owner donate, opt for an easement or respond to a bargain sale to the Conservancy?

Your Chapter offices will welcome your intelligence.



Line Drawing of
"Fisher"

by Margaret LaFarge

The Nature Conservancy is a national non-profit organization devoted to the preservation of natural areas which are ecologically and environmentally significant. Since 1954 the Conservancy has been instrumental in preserving more than 875,000 acres in 47 states and the Virgin Islands. The Connecticut Chapter alone has now preserved more than 9,000 acres.

These landholdings form a living museum available in perpetuity for scientific enquiry and education. They include coastal and inland wetlands, mountains, farms, forests, ravines, islands, and other distinctive features of our diverse Connecticut landscape.

Join us in protecting more of Connecticut's natural heritage. What we have saved and what we will save in the next few years will be all that will remain to be passed on to future generations. There will never be another chance.

For information on membership and land donation, write The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter, PO Box MMM, Wesleyan Station, Middletown, Connecticut 06457. (203-344-0716)